1967

Three Hemingway short stories: a reading through technical analysis

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THREE HEMINGWAY SHORT STORIES:

A READING THROUGH TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

by

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A THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Faculty

of Lehigh University

in Candidacy for the Degree of

Master of Arts in English

Lehigh University

1967

This thesis is accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Sept. 14, 1967
Date

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ABSTRACT

The undeniable importance of Ernest Hemingway to the development of American literature derives primarily, although certainly not entirely, from his technical achievements. Working in an era of literary experimentation and influenced by such innovators as Sherwood Anderson and Gertrude Stein, Hemingway formulated and perfected a technique that is distinctly his own. This technique is perhaps best described by analogy to an iceberg: only a fraction of the total configuration of the situation being presented is visible; the remainder is present, but submerged. Hemingway's technical artistry lies in his ability to convey through careful selection and ordering of a minimum of objective surface detail situations of great magnitude, complexity, and emotional intensity.

The economical nature of the iceberg technique renders it most suitable to and effective in short works, and I feel that Hemingway's most successful literary efforts are his short stories. It is the purpose of this study to examine three of these stories in terms of the iceberg technique, to analyze the objective surface of each story for clues to the basic situation that is Hemingway's real literary concern in each instance. The three stories to be discussed have been chosen to illustrate the flexibility with which Hemingway applied his technique and the artistry with which he adapted the technique to each literary situation individually.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The aspect of Ernest Hemingway's literary art that perhaps constitutes his major contribution to the development of literature in general and represents the high point of his own literary achievements is his technique. Though he may never have mastered his artistic vision in the sense that no unified, meaningful structure or transcendent reality ever emerged from the limited, fragmentized world of his own experience, the same cannot be said of his technique. Influenced by the experimental styles of such innovators as Sherwood Anderson and Gertrude Stein, Hemingway pioneered and perfected a technique of his own, blending what he felt was best of other literary styles with his own original conceptions. At its best, the resulting technique involves a polished precision and economy of style in which every word, every detail, is especially relevant to the controlling idea of the work in hand.[1] To be sure, this precise and economic style is not the only literary technique employed by Hemingway; his novels, as well as some of his shorter works, often contain expansive passages of description and of psychological exposition. My contention is, however, that Hemingway is not at his technical best in an expansive style, that the genius of his literary technique lies rather in that

precise and economic style that has become his hallmark and that is the key to the force and perfection of the best of his literary efforts, his short stories. It is the purpose of this study to examine this literary technique in terms of what it is and how it shapes and is shaped by the short stories in which it is most effectively used.

The importance of Hemingway's technique to his own work and to the development of literature in general has commanded much critical attention. Nearly every major analysis of Hemingway includes an attempt to put a label on his style, and nearly every attempt fails to capture completely its essence. The simplicity of the style itself commands description rather than definition; in presenting only the bare outline or the flat surface of a literary situation, it demands that the reader draw out and explain for himself the levels of meaning and kinds of effects implicit in the objective minimum furnished by Hemingway. The extreme of this problem of interpretation is expressed by Kashkeen in his contention that Hemingway does not deal "? . . directly and simply with things either simple or complex, but deliberately simplifies things making them yet more complicated."[2] Kashkeen is perhaps overstating the case for most of Hemingway's fiction, but he has pointed up one fundamental characteristic of Hemingway's technique: the paradoxical result of simplification in style is an apparently increased complexity of meaning.

I say "apparently," because many of the ideas and situations Hemingway presents are surprisingly simple; the complexity lies in the increased effort the reader must make to <u>discover</u> the controlling idea. Hemingway was not the first to require such effort on the part of his reader; Henry James had already laid a welter of literary traps for unwary readers with his unreliable narrators and enigmatic characters. Hemingway's originality in this regard was not what he did but how he did it. James' lengthy and intricate literary designs advance a concept of reality as necessarily obscure and uncertain in some of its aspects. To use one of James' own metaphors, "the figure in the carpet" is not always available to discovery in his work or in the view of reality it represents. With Hemingway, on the other hand, there is in each literary case a basic design that can be discovered, and the clues to the discovery are to be found in the objective presentation of surface detail. He demands perceptive care and effort on the part of his reader, but in return he offers the certainty that discovery is possible. Hemingway's reality is not complex, but it is not flat; its surface reveals only a part of the whole, but that part holds the key to the rest. His technique involves the cooperation of reader and writer for the exposition of a faithful and complete representation of a given situation.[3]

Until now, I have been advancing generalities about

the Hemingway technique. More precise descriptions have been offered by numerous critics and by Hemingway himself, and some discussion of these is necessary as a foundation on which to build the short-story analyses that form the substance of this discussion. Perhaps the best place to begin is with Hemingway himself (allowing, of course, for the possibility that the writer may know what he is attempting but not what he is doing). In Death in the Afternoon Hemingway states his artistic goal as the creation of the truth of any given situation at the time of its occurrence, and he describes his greatest difficulty as that of putting down ". . . what really happened in action; what the actual things were which produced the emotion that you experienced." His artistic challenge was creating ". . . the real thing, the sequence of motion and fact which made the emotion. . . ."[4] The technique evolved from these basic principles is essentially pictorial, a precise representation of the facts of a situation, with little explanatory or interpolative comment.[5] Through a series of inter-related details of scene and fragments of dialogue a "sequence of motion and fact" is carefully set forth, and implicit in this sequence is the "emotion" central to the situation being treated. In Hemingway's short fiction, this sequence is nearly always linear, in keeping with the overall simplicity of his technique. Harry Levin emphasizes this linear quality and analyzes the particular way in which Hemingway

achieves force and vitality through it:

> . . . Hemingway keeps his writing on a linear plane. He holds the purity of his line by moving in one direction, ignoring sidetracks and avoiding structural complications. By presenting a succession of images, each of which has its brief moment when it commands the reader's undivided attention, he achieves his special vividness and fluidity. For what he lacks in structure he makes up in sequence, carefully ordering visual impressions as he sets them down and ironically juxtaposing the various items on his lists and inventories.[6]

Complementing the simplicity and spareness of Hemingway's exposition of situation is his use of vocabulary and syntax. He chooses simple words and repeats them often. His use of adjectives and descriptive phrases is limited to those details essential to and revelatory of the central situation. The majority of his verbs are forms of "be." His syntax is simple and straightforward: most sentences are of the subject-verb-object order; few subordinate clauses are used. The potentially choppy quality of short, simple sentences is alleviated by the frequent use of "and" to link independent clauses. The suitability of this approach to vocabulary and syntax to Hemingway's general technique is obvious. In keeping his diction elemental and relatively unembellished and his syntax

simple, Hemingway underscores the factual, pictorial quality of his presentation. In linking the various elements of the situation, each one of which is complete in itself, he simulates the natural flow of experience.[7]

Hemingway's technique, then, is the representation of surfaces in the most basic way possible in order not to obscure the human situation that gives them importance. Carlos Baker describes the technique as one of "double perception," involving ". . . the ability to look within and to describe that complex of mixed emotions which a given set of circumstances has produced in the observer's mind."[8] The task of the reader is to reverse the writer's process and use the presented facts as instruments by which to uncover the basic situation. Hemingway has advanced a description of his own technique that, in true Hemingway form, provides a pictorial analogy: ". . . I always try to write on the principle of the iceberg. There is seven eighths of it under water for every part that shows."[9] In Hemingway's short fiction the part of greatest importance--the meaning, the basis of the situation--is nearly always hidden, but the configuration of the surface provides us with a key to the nature of what is concealed.

The use of individual, objective details to suggest other elements of greater complexity or other levels of meaning suggests the technique of the symbolist, and in this very general sense Hemingway is a symbolist. He dif-

fers from the formal practices of symbolism, however, in that those details used to evoke larger significances are inherent in the situation he is describing. Baker points up this important qualifying element in Hemingway's symbolism:

> . . . the symbolic in Hemingway's writings must come as naturally as the leaves to a tree or it had better not come at all. He seems early to have rejected the arbitrary importation of symbols which are not strictly germane to the action in hand. . . . Instead of ransacking other arts and literatures for viable symbols, he chose rather to allow the object or scene or person whose function was to be symbolic to gather its meanings through a process of association strictly within the terms of the ongoing narrative.[10]

At the same time that it qualifies Hemingway's symbolism, Baker's statement points up a basic difference between Hemingway's technique and another literary technique with which it has been identified--T.S. Eliot's "objective correlative." In the sense that Hemingway's correlatives are thoroughly grounded in the immediate situation, they differ from Eliot's, which tend to be garnered from "other arts and literatures" and imposed, albeit fittingly, on the situation. Although it shares elements with a variety of literary forms and theories, Hemingway's technique is ultimately distinctly individual.

The importance of any observations on literary technique is proportionate to the degree to which they advance understanding of the literature itself. It is my thesis that a knowledge of Hemingway's technique is essential to a full reading of his short fiction. The analyses that follow are of three stories that demonstrate this technique in its purest form. In the first, "A Canary for One," the technique is confined to the consciousness of a single character and is used to convey an attitude which, in turn, suggests the pre-story situation that created the attitude. In this story there are effectively two levels of the iceberg below the surface. Significant, too, is the fact that the technical vehicle is primarily the detail of setting as it impinges on the consciousness of the controlling character. The second story, "Hills Like White Elephants," provides contrast for the first in that the problematical situation does develop within the story, although it originates outside, and in that the technical vehicle is primarily dialogue, with only a few details of setting. The final story, "Homage to Switzerland," combines setting and dialogue as technical vehicles, going beyond the first two in that similar details are used for differing effects in three separate situations. In their similarities and differences these three stories exemplify both the effectiveness and the versatility of Hemingway's technique and the artistic skill with which he employs it.

CHAPTER TWO

"A Canary for One"

"A Canary for One"[1] is considered by most Hemingway critics to be one of a number of stories that constitute Hemingway's "marriage group." In terms of theme Philip Young places it in a kind of middle position between the idealized love relationships of Catherine (A Farewell to Arms, 1929) and Maria (For Whom the Bell Tolls, 1940) and the overt hostility of Margot ("The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," 1936); it is one of those numerous stories ("Mr. and Mrs. Elliott," 1925; "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," 1924; "Out of Season," 1923; "Cat in the Rain," 1925) ". . . which present a discouraged picture of the rose with the bloom off, of couples under a spell of disenchantment. . . ."[2] Awareness of the central situation of a marriage that has failed is essential to a proper reading of "A Canary for One"; yet it is precisely this situation that lies buried, that forms the concealed seven-eighths of the iceberg. We are able to discover this essential knowledge only by reading the clues in terms of which the surface narrative is structured.

The significance of "A Canary for One" rests upon a point of information not revealed until the final sentence. Carlos Baker has termed the conclusion a "surprise ending," and, indeed, that is the effect it produces at the first

reading. Until the final sentence--"We were returning to Paris to set up separate residences" (CFO, 342)--the story seems to be about the American woman with the canary. Yet there are, from the very beginning, indications that it is the narrator with whom we are going to be most concerned--it is not the American woman but the narrator's reaction to her and the comment this reaction makes on his character that are important.[3] Hemingway's story does not really end with a "surprise," in the manner of an O. Henry story; the final sentence merely renders overt a piece of information that has been implicit throughout the narrative.

Since the narrative of "A Canary for One" is controlled by the central consciousness of one character, to whom I shall refer as the narrator, the clues to the situation with which the story is really concerned must be sought in his character and attitude. In attempting to discover the character of a narrator who reveals nothing overtly about himself until the final sentence, the reader finds an analysis of the narrative style most productive. The first half of the story involves the presentation of a series of discrete images whose only relationship to one another seems to lie in the fact that they are noted by a single consciousness. The first paragraph is a commentary on the scenery through which the train is passing; the second paragraph switches us abruptly to the middle of a conversation apparently taking place in the train; and the third paragraph forces

still another change in attention-focus--this time to the atmosphere and appearance of the inside of the railroad car in which the narrator is travelling.[4] The attention of the narrator not only wanders in an erratic fashion but also attaches itself to a strange variety of objects. He observes in great detail: although the train is a rapide, described in the first sentence as moving "very quickly," the narrator manages to note that the house they pass is long, red, made of stone, with a garden, and that there are exactly four palm-trees, with tables beneath them. Obviously his perceptions are highly acute and somewhat unusual. Throughout the story he notices such relatively insignificant and random details as the American woman's purchase of a half-bottle of Evian water and the train's stopping at Cannes for exactly twelve minutes. These heightened and erratic perceptions suggest, indirectly, that the narrator is in an extremely emotional or nervous state. Hemingway is using his sequence of motion and fact, this time not to produce the emotion but to register an emotion already present. At such moments of extreme emotion or anxiety the details of the surrounding world take on an unusually intense relevance; they function as recipients of the character's intense attention, and within his consciousness they take on some of the qualities of his emotion.

As the general pattern of the narrator's perceptions

characterizes his general psychological state, so the specific nature of the objects his consciousness selects comments specifically on his own character and on the particular causes for his agitation. We note that the narrator's attention is initially attracted by the outside world, by growing things--the garden and trees--by the sea, and by the vibrant colors of red and green. There is a sense of the freedom and expansiveness of nature; even the house blends softly into the scene. Yet almost immediately the sense of confinement implicit in the image of the house is picked up, through identification of color, by the confining walls of a cut through red stone and clay. At this point the voice of the American woman impinges on the narrator's consciousness, and all subsequent views of the landscape give an increasing sense of desolation and confinement. The stone of which the house was built assumes a new, dual role as a barrier to the sea on one side and as a confining range of "gray-stone hills" on the other; the shade in the garden suggests an obscurity that now becomes actualized in the pulled window-blind in the train compartment, and the gray-brown color of shadow is picked up in the dust and oil and gray stone that dominate the landscape. The details associated with the house, suggesting as it does marriage and family life, have been fragmentized and transformed into images of oppression, entrapment, and sterility. Tony Tanner capsules the particular

effectiveness of these opening paragraphs and points up the importance of technique in creating that effectiveness:

> . . . such passages as this bring home to us the claustrophobic, oppressive feeling in the compartment. The elimination of sea and breeze, the eye listlessly, desperately seeking some outlet through two windows and noting, with that curious lucidity which can come at moments of stifling tension, the details of the outer landscape: being given so much we are given as it were the environmental truth of the situation, as opposed to the psychological truth of it. Not the inward facts, but how the inward facts determine the registering of the outward scene.[5]

From this point on, the narrator's observations of the landscape are primarily of the dreary and destructive--smoky chimneys in Marseilles and a burning house between Marseilles and Avignon--and the dreariness and destruction are all increasingly connected with man and his institutions. We see no more green; there is no further mention of the sun--the only other brightness we see is that of the fire destroying the house between Marseilles and Avignon. Brown and gray predominate, even in descriptions of men (in the station at Avignon there are Negroes in brown suits), and most of the reported scenes are set against the darkness of night. The journey itself terminates "in the dark of the Gare de Lyons" (CFO, 341).[6] Details of destruction--the ruined fortifica-

tions of Paris, the burning farmhouse, the splintered railway cars--are among the most frequent and most concrete of the narrator's visual impressions.

That the narrator's view of his surroundings begins its change from beauty to desolation immediately after his attention is first distracted by the chattering of the American woman has already been noted, but the significance of that narrative point to the attitude of the narrator warrants further consideration of the American woman's role in the story. Since she dominates such a great part of the narrative--enough to make the story seem hers, until the final line--it seems obvious that her character and attitude are relevant to the narrator and his emotional state. Baker sees Hemingway's use of the dual stories as a device for establishing through dialogue a parallel between the about-to-separate husband and wife and an enforced separation about which they hear on the train-ride between Cannes and the Gare de Lyons in Paris.[7] A consideration of those snatches of the American woman's conversation that penetrate the narrator's consciousness reveals two things: first, the woman herself appears to him as silly, superficial, and domineering; second, those aspects of her inconsequential line of conversation that catch his attention are concerned, directly or indirectly with the daughter who has recently had such an unhappy experience with love.

The American woman is marked as superficial and flighty

by the quality of her conversation and the attitudes it reveals. For example, in the first snatch of dialogue presented to us, the less-than-profound subject occupying the lady is the history of her purchase of the canary she is carrying with her on the train. Somehow the fact that it was Sunday morning is connected to the fact that they had only an hour ashore; this leads, without apparent need for transition, to the fact that the man wanted to be paid in dollars, which, in turn, leads in some manner to the observation that the canary sings very beautifully. The suggestion of superficiality implicit in this woman's conversation is borne out in the narrator's observation that her wholesome, middle-aged, American-abroad façade of sophistication can be donned as easily and quickly as a mask, in a train washroom. The degree of individuality and depth in her character is neatly capsuled in the fact that her name can be "found by the man from Cook's on a typewritten page in a sheaf of typewritten pages" (CFO, 341) that he carries in his pocket. The woman's lack of any real perceptivity is symbolized by her deafness, is evident in her treatment of her daughter, is reflected in her failure to notice the strained relationship that must certainly exist between the couple sharing her compartment, and is epitomized in her inability even to recognize these two people as her countrymen. She bears the outward marks of sophistication and experience, but underneath her polished exterior is a

frightened, aging, neurotic, stagnating woman. She is already middle-aged; she is getting deaf; she is so set in routine that she has bought her clothes from the same couturier for twenty years; and she is afraid, in spite of all her travel experience, of the speed of the train.

In her superficiality and degeneration, the American woman who shares a compartment with the narrator and his wife counterpoints the condition of their marriage: although they are still posing as a married couple, the inner substance of their relationship is as decayed as is her character, to the point of disintegration. The woman's tenaciously held conviction that "Americans make the best husbands" (CFO, 339), already proven false through its failure to bring her daughter happiness, is doubly negated by the fact that it is being flatly, though covertly, contradicted by the very people to whom she is protesting its validity. She has no concept of reality; her reaction to her daughter's refusal to eat and sleep is that she "doesn't think" her daughter has gotten over the thwarted love affair. When the narrator points out the three wrecked railway cars--an imagistic parallel to the wrecked lives of the three people on the train--she sees only the last one, even then failing to realize that the wreck she fears from the speed of the train on which she is riding has already occurred, on another more vital level in her own life.

That the narrator allows this woman's account of her

daughter's unhappy love affair to claim his otherwise wandering attention indicates that the young girl's plight holds some significance for him, an indication made certainty by the final sentence of the story. In addition to the relevance of her narrative to the narrator's emotional state, the character of the woman herself is important, in that the narrator apparently sees her as similar to his wife. Both women are Americans; they have been to the same places; they have the same taste in clothes; and they have interests sufficiently alike to support a constant flow of conversation. Perhaps it would not be going too far, although there is no direct textual support of this point, to infer that the narrator sees his wife as the primary destructive force in their marriage.

Although the narrator does give the American woman some attention, he remains essentially detached from personal interest in her; he notes her conversation only occasionally, and her physical appearance makes almost no impression on him. This same detachment is amplified in his reaction to his wife: we are not even made aware of her presence, aside from a vague reference to three beds being prepared for the night, until the canary's chirp and the sudden appearance of the landscape of suburban Paris, signifying journey's end, bring the narrator's attention solidly to rest on the situation in which he presently finds himself. Only when the narrator deliberately focuses his attention

on his wife does he remember her presence. She certainly does not emerge through the narrative filter of his consciousness as a dominant personality: she is never physically described, and that part of her conversation that is reported is confined largely to one-sentence questions and affirmative echoings of the American woman's ideas. The few self-motivated statements the wife does make merely reinforce our negative impression of the state of her marriage to the narrator. She tells the American woman that Vevey, the place where they spent their honeymoon, "'was a very lovely place'" (CFO, 341, my italics), indicating that they no longer have the feeling of honeymoon magic with which they began their marriage.

For the husband, too, Vevey appears indirectly as a thing of the past. The vineyards for which it is famous[8] have their present counterpart in the "fields of grapes" (CFO, 337) noticed by the narrator early in the trip. His glimpse of them is fleeting, now; they are flat fields rather than the elevated hillsides near Vevey; and they are confined between an oiled road and gray-stone hills. They have been removed from the mountains, characteristically seen in Hemingway's fiction as a source of life, to the plain, and the mountains themselves have become harsh and lifeless.

That the daughter's love affair began in Vevey is important here because it symbolizes, in its unfortunate

consequences, the alienation of two other people whose hopes also began there. Indeed, it would seem that the marriage, like the unfortunate daughter's love affair, never had a chance: it began in the fall, and the honeymoon was spent in an old hotel. Age and its concomitant decay seem to have surrounded and destroyed the love of the American couple almost from the start, paralleling the aging and decaying American woman's destruction of her daughter's love from its beginning.

For the narrator, the failure of love and the resulting estrangement from his wife have engendered an even more general estrangement from life itself. His brief vision of life--the sea, the trees--is long past; his attention is now dominated by destruction and squalor. He is detached from his wife, from his country, from the companionship of other human beings. He is a foreigner in this country (a country traditionally associated with romance), yet refuses to claim his own. When he is given a chance to identify with his wife and the other woman in the compartment by admitting himself an American, he prefers to speak as though he really were an Englishman.[9] He takes no part in the conversation, other than to state that he wears "braces" and that there has been a train wreck, and in the first instance no one hears him. His observations of those people around him are infrequent, and they are strangely slanted toward the superficial and irrelevant: he notices people watching the burn-

ing house but seems uninterested in anyone who might look as though he had been a victim of the fire. Like the fire-watchers, he seems to be contemplating the ruin of his own domestic security from the point of view of an observer, rather than of one directly involved. When the train stops at Avignon he notices people, but only in a superficial, almost comically-detached way: "People got on and off" (CFO, 338). His attention is absorbed by the world outside the train; yet he is separated from that world by a physical barrier of glass and steel.

In addition to this estrangement from life, there is, in the narrator, a seeming inability or unwillingness to control or direct his life. He speaks constantly of "the train" as the moving force, and we feel he has acquiesced to being carried, neither resisting nor implementing nor caring for his own progress. Indeed, throughout the first part of the story, the narrator is so detached from any sense of self-motivation that he never refers to himself by even as much as one personal pronoun.[10]

In considering the reason for this detachment, we come face to face with a chicken-or-the-egg problem: is the narrator's general attitude the cause of the failure of his marriage? or is it a result? Although the story provides no conclusive answer, there are some evidences that the narrator's present psychological state is the result of a destructive experience. The first evidence appears,

on a somewhat symbolic level, in the opening paragraph. The narrator's eye is initially caught by the sea, the garden, and the trees; these images of life strike a response in his consciousness. The progress of the train, however--perhaps like the progress of his life until now--carries him away from this vision; he is aware of its fading, the sea now coming "only occasionally" (CFO, 337), now "no more, even occasionally" (CFO, 337), and finally "the last of the sun on the water" (CFO, 338) as the harbor is left behind. From this point on, the details that catch his attention are those of decay and destruction, discussed earlier in this analysis.

A second source of evidence in support of the destructive-experience thesis lies in the point of view. The fact that the story is being told in retrospect is an acknowledgement of the fact that it represents a crisis, a moment of change, an experience important enough to have been remembered, and remembered in detail. The kind of detail on which the narrator's consciousness focuses suggests further the nature of his attitude toward this crisis. As Joseph Defalco has noted, the selection of details implies a value judgment on the part of the narrator-observer: the failure of his marriage brings what he feels to be the negative value of decay to his life and to his world as a whole.[11]

Still another indication of a previously different character in the narrator is evidenced in his reaction to

Paris. His speculations on whether or not things still function as he remembers they once did indicate that at one time he was aware of the world around him and involved in it:

> The train was now coming into Paris. The fortifications were levelled but grass had not grown. There were many cars standing on tracks--brown wooden restaurant-cars and brown wooden sleeping-cars that would go to Italy at five o'clock that night, if that train still left at five; the cars were marked Paris-Rome, and cars, with seats on the roofs, that went back and forth to the suburbs with, at certain hours, people in all the seats and on the roofs, if that were the way it were still done, and passing were the white walls and many windows of houses (CFO, 340).

The old familiarity and involvement have given way to uncertainty and almost total alienation, and the change has its focus in the altering of the narrator's marriage from a relationship of intimate involvement to one of the alienation of "separate residences." In spite of a technical marriage bond, the narrator and his wife are as separate as their good-bys to the American woman: ". . . my wife said good-by and I said good-by to the American lady. . ." (CFO, 341). The narrator's use of the term "my wife" might, in another situation, suggest a possessively intimate attitude; here, however, it serves at best as a formal label for a purely formal relationship. Its present effect is

merely a strengthening of the feeling of separation; the narrator's wife has become for him no more than an object, a thing, a social appurtenance.

Though the narrator's wife, as a person, no longer claims much of his attention, the problem of his deteriorated relationship with her remains basic to everything he notices. Among the discrete images that impinge upon his consciousness, the one that provides the strongest focus for the dilemma of the story is the American lady's canary. It is the canary the American lady is discussing when her conversation first penetrates the narrator's consciousness, and it is this canary that heralds the end of the journey--and the end of the marriage--with a single chirp. The canary is, both of itself and in its function in the story, representative of artificiality and distortion of nature. Domesticated canaries of the kind bought by tourists are products of careful artificial selection and breeding that has reduced them to gaudy miniatures of their natural prototypes. The artificiality of this particular canary is further emphasized by the fact that it came from Palermo (a resort city noted for the ostentatious and baroque quality of its architecture), by the fact that it is caged, not free, by the fact that a bird that should sing "very beautifully" gives only one chirp during the entire train ride, and by the fact that it sleeps away from the influence of the natural breeze in the unnaturalness of

a blue light. Its constant preening of its feathers makes it as vain and superficial as the woman who owns it; its yellow feathers gleaming in the sunlight are a mockery of "the last of the sun on the water" (CFO, 338) that constituted the narrator's final view of the life-giving sea and of nature unspoiled by man.

As a glittering, artificial perversion of the natural and the real, the canary is a fitting symbol for the American woman's attempt to compensate her daughter for the destruction of a natural, sincere love for the young Swiss engineer. For the narrator, too, the natural meaning and beauty of love have failed; both he and his wife will be forced to find substitutes for one another of which, in another situation, the canary is the epitome.[12] For the narrator, the canary provides a focus for the distortion of the natural and for the unsatisfactory quality of the artificial, which is all that is left to replace it; the only pleasures that remain are society's substitutes, imaged in the "big advertisements for the Belle Jardiniere and Dubonnet and Pernod on the walls toward the train" (CFO, 339) in the outside-of-Paris towns. The canary is alone, and it symbolizes the loneliness of the separation that is imminent for the man and his wife. In this respect the canary functions as a device for relating "A Canary for One" to the title of the collection in which it appears--Men Without Women. In its aloneness the canary has sig-

nificance for the American woman, the narrator, the daughter, or the wife only as individuals, outside of meaningful love relationships. There is only one canary, and it is "a canary for one."

The literary merit of "A Canary for One" certainly does not lie in originality of theme; as has been observed, Hemingway used the subject of unhappy marriage a number of times, developing it much more fully in some of his other stories. Neither do we see here any strong development of the code hero, the Hemingway hero, the "wounded" man restructuring his world, the accidental quality of life, or any of the other major Hemingway themes. The aspect of the story that assures its merit and characterizes its author is its technique. Here is a Hemingway "iceberg" par excellence, perhaps no more than one-tenth above water, but so well constructed as to imply readily and fully the form and nature of the buried nine-tenths. Fleeting observations of landscape and snatches of apparently meaningless conversation are juxtaposed with such skill that they are able to convey fully one of those minor, everyday tragedies of men that have such major relevance to the general human condition and to Hemingway's view of that condition.

CHAPTER THREE

"Hills Like White Elephants"

"Hills Like White Elephants"[1] shows both thematic and technical similarities to "A Canary for One": its central situation involves the deterioration of a love relationship, and the total configuration of that situation is suggested by skillful selection and presentation of the objective detail of its surface. Yet within the context of this general similarity, these two stories differ in method of presentation, and a consideration of the differences sheds further light on Hemingway's technical artistry.

"A Canary for One" presented an attitude toward a previously-established situation through the consciousness of one of the parties involved, conveying knowledge of this attitude and situation to the reader by an extended series of discrete details that gradually fell into revelatory patterns. "Hills Like White Elephants," however, presents an actual developmental stage in the central situation primarily through dialogue between the two characters involved, conveying awareness of the nature of this situation through repetition of the same few details with varying shades of meaning.[2] In each case, the particular way in which suggestive detail is handled is organic to the situation around which the story is built. In "A Canary for One" Hemingway is concerned with the effects of a past

occurrence on a single person; so he limits point of view to the consciousness of that person and then allows that consciousness to reveal its own emotional state through reactions to its surroundings. In "Hills Like White Elephants," Hemingway is concerned with a developmental stage in a problem situation involving two people; so he presents us with that couple working out their problem through dialogue. The attitude of both characters are revealed in the expression of their individual thoughts and their mutual responses. Awareness of these attitudes on the reader's part is an essential complement to the conversational surface, since these attitudes ironically undercut what <u>appears</u> to be taking place, revealing at the same time a more basic problem of which the surface situation is merely an outgrowth.

Ostensibly, "Hills Like White Elephants" is an episode in which a man and a girl, apparently unmarried, discuss the pros and cons of an abortion while awaiting a train that will take them to Madrid, where the operation can be performed. The man argues for it; his token protestations that he would not have the girl do it against her will are undercut by his implication that things can never be the same between them again if the child becomes third party to their relationship. The girl shows greater reluctance, both physically and emotionally, but finally accedes to the man's wishes. The resolution of the problem, however, is only ap-

parent; it is a sham solution to a problem that is only an indicator of more fundamental trouble. It is this basic problem that is the focal point of "Hills Like White Elephants" and the center toward which all the surface details of dialogue and setting point. A close reading of these details reveals that the real dilemma facing the man and woman is not the abortion but the sterility of their love; the abortion is merely a physical manifestation of a barren love that, without revitalization, must itself die.

Of the two vehicles for suggestive detail, dialogue and setting, used in "Hills Like White Elephants," dialogue is of greater importance in terms both of quantity and of the amount of information revealed. Richard Bridgman describes the surface of this dialogue, together with what is taking place beneath the surface: "[b]y means of conversational trivia and without ever being directly broached, the idea of an abortion is proposed, discussed, objected to, and finally accepted."[3] The nature of the dialogue is organic to the situation from which it evolves. R. W. Lid describes the language used by the couple as "a shield and a weapon" under whose protective thrust ". . . they are able to give vent to emotions too painful to face directly."[4] Rhythmic patterning and suggestive detail, rather than direct exposition, are the means of conveyance for these all-important emotions.

The emotional rhythm of the dialogue begins with a feeling of strained diffidence suggested by the short,

stichometric opening lines. The girl's "'What should we drink?'" is followed by the man's "'It's pretty hot,'" and, in turn, by the girl's "'Let's drink beer'" (HLWE, 273). The same staccato quality continues until the taste of a new drink that proves to be just like all the others brings to the girl's mind the repetitive boredom of their life together. As she attempts to work out her feelings in words, her speeches become longer, in contrast with the still brief replies of the man:

> "Yes," said the girl. "Everything tastes of licorice. Especially all the things you've waited so long for, like absinthe."
>
> "Oh, cut it out."
>
> . . . . .
>
> "I wanted to try this new drink. That's all we do, isn't it--look at things and try new drinks?"
>
> "I guess so." (HLWE, 274).

The difference in dialogue here parallels a dichotomy central to the story: the girl is the only one of the two to really confront and struggle with their problem; the man ignores every lead into a possibly meaningful discussion.

When the girl's brief comment on the sterile routine of their life forces the man's attention to rest on the problem of the moment, his speeches become longer in an attempt to persuade her that things will be all right again if she will have the abortion. In these lengthened speeches

the same difference between the two people evident in the earlier dialogue is more subtly but just as certainly displayed. The man's speeches are longer because they are repetitious; the entire content of a page of his dialogue is merely a series of variations on his two themes: "'It's really an awfully simple operation . . .'" and "'We'll be fine afterward. Just like we were before'" (HLWE, 275). His repetitive speeches are a mockery of her probing comments on their relationship ("'That's all we do, isn't it--look at things and try new drinks?'" [HLWE, 274]). Hemingway is making ironic use of surface similarity to accentuate underlying differences.

The man's insistence that an abortion will solve all their problems, in conflict with the girl's awareness that their problem lies much deeper and will only be complicated by an abortion, re-creates the original tension between the two, and the dialogue lapses into its earlier staccato form. The intervening dialogue, however, has brought the tension to a focus, and the subsequent speeches are those of open conflict rather than the earlier polite evasions:

"We can have everything."

"No, we can't."

"We can have the whole world."

"No, we can't."

"We can go everywhere."

"No, we can't. . . ." (HLWE, 276)

The man's unreasoning affirmations and the girl's denials, born of her greater perceptivity, are expressed in the same tense rhythms of dialogue with which the story began, and the content of the lines just quoted reveals the basic contradiction in views that explains in retrospect the tension in the earlier lines.

The increase of tension that brings the man and girl into open conflict continues until the girl reaches a point of near hysteria. Her repeated denials in the passage just cited are followed by interruptions of the man's incessant repetition and eventually by an overt request--"'Can't we maybe stop talking?'" (HLWE, 276). Still the senseless repetition continues, until the girl's control dissolves in a frantic, mockingly repetitive plea of her own: "'Would you please please please please please please please stop talking?'" (HLWE, 277). The man's brief attempt at placating is silenced by the girl's "'I'll scream'" (HLWE, 277), and the whole situation is pushed into the background by the announcement that the train will arrive in five minutes. The remaining dialogue is brief and of little consequence; further discussion is both impossible and useless. Having failed to penetrate the wall of imperceptivity behind which the man remains, the girl accepts his solution, and the final line of the story, delivered in a stylistic mockery of the man's own speech, evidences her acquiescence in his world of sham and pretense: "'I feel fine,' she said.

'There's nothing wrong with me. I feel fine'" (HLWE, 278).

Hemingway's use of dialogue in "Hills Like White Elephants" is a specialized form of the iceberg technique. Through length and juxtaposition of speeches and selection and repetition of phrases, he has created a sense of emotional movement that gives information about the all-important mental states of the characters speaking the lines.

Contributing to the effect of the general rhythmic structure of the dialogue are individual words and phrases. We have noted that Hemingway's principal technical device in this story is that of repetition of the same detail to achieve varying effects, and this device is most pronounced in his selection and use of vocabulary. Some of the frequently repeated words refer to concrete objects, with the significance deriving from the objects rather than from the words, and these will be discussed at a later point. A few repeated words, however, hold within themselves significance for the story. The one word that is repeated most frequently and with greatest impact is "it," and an examination of the way in which Hemingway uses this word will serve to illustrate his technique in general.

Since "it" is a common pronominal referent, the frequency of its occurrence does not of itself make the word significant. When "it" is used early in the conversation between the man and the girl to refer to the weather, the train, the various drinks, and the beaded curtain, there is

no particular significance in the repetition because the word is merely an indicator for a number of previously identified objects. The point in the story at which "it" takes on an unusual function and becomes significant in itself is the beginning of the conversation about the abortion. The "'It's lovely'" (HLWE, 274) with which the girl describes the beer is followed by the man's "'It's really an awfully simple operation, Jig'" (HLWE, 275), and the abruptness of the transition is jarring. The use of the same word to introduce two such different statements in such immediate sequence has a reductive effect on the second. Unlike the girl's comment on the beer, the man's statement has no identifying antecedent; nor does he at any time throughout the rest of the conversation make explicit the thing to which he is referring. Rather, his endless repetition of "it" forces that vague word to assume a concrete meaning:

> "It's not really an operation at all."
>
> . . . .
>
> "It's really not anything. It's just to let the air in."
>
> . . . . .
>
> "They just let the air in and then it's all perfectly natural."
>
> . . . . .
>
> "You don't have to be afraid. I've known lots of

people that have done it."

. . . . .

"I think it's the best thing to do. But I don't want you to do it if you don't really want to."

(HLWE, 275, my italics).

The man's constant avoidance of the concrete term "abortion" and his repetition of the vague "it" convey perfectly his inability to confront the reality of the situation.

The girl's use of "it" to refer to the abortion suggests her ultimate capitulation to the man's terms for their relationship, but her use of the word reveals also the more complex and perceptive nature of her vision. For more than half of the long conversation about the abortion, the girl does not refer to it at all. When she finally does make reference, she adopts the man's term "it," but uses it in such a way that she goes beyond his restricted view and relates the act to its consequences: "'And if I do it you'll be happy and things will be like they were and you'll love me?'" (HLWE, 275, my italics). Her next comment focuses the complexity and extent of her vision within the word "it": "'But if I do it, then it will be nice again if I say things are like white elephants, and you'll like it?'" (HLWE, 275, my italics). Here "it" connotes both the abortion and the relationship between the man and girl, and implicit in the confusion of referents is the girl's awareness that her pregnancy and its consequences are inextric-

ably bound up with the past and future of her relationship with this man. This awareness is made more explicit at a later point in the same conversation. To the man's protestation that they can have the whole world (once the abortion is performed), she replies "'No, we can't. It isn't ours any more. . . . And once they take it away, you never get it back'" (HLWE, 276, my italics). Their world, their child, and their love for one another are so inter-related that they cannot kill the child without destroying their own lives. "It" for the girl is not a "simple operation" after which all will be fine, as it is for the man; although both are using the same word, they are poles apart in their understanding of its meaning. The similarity in their speech serves only to point out the disparity of their perceptions.

The failure of communication telescoped in the single word "it" is one of those elements that lie just below the surface of the story, and here again the vehicle of discovery is dialogue. The girl's first line--"'What should we drink?'"--receives what is at best an oblique answer from her companion: "'It's pretty hot . . .'" (HLWE, 273). Their first attempt at conversation couples a failure to understand with an undercurrent of hostility that may indicate an unwillingness to understand:

> The girl was looking off at the lines of hills. They were white in the sun and the country was brown and dry.
>
> "They look like white elephants," she said.

"I've never seen one," the man drank his beer.

"No, you wouldn't have."

"I might have," the man said. "Just because you say I wouldn't have doesn't prove anything."

(HLWE, 273)

The man's perceptivity is narrow and unimaginative; the girl recognizes this limitation in him, but he neither can nor will recognize it in himself. These few lines of relatively insignificant dialogue have established early in the story the failure of communication and understanding that explains subsequent conversations in which the man and girl either repeat each other senselessly--

"We want two Anis del Toro."

/Waitress:7 "With water?"

"Do you want it with water?"

"I don't know," the girl said. "Is it good with water?"

"It's all right."

"You want them with water?" asked the woman.

"Yes, with water." (HLWE, 274) --

or directly contradict one another, as in the passage cited earlier in which the girl makes a refrain of "'No, we can't'" (HLWE, 276). The only rapprochement reached by the two in the course of the story is the pseudo-agreement on the abortion made possible by the girl's self-negating surrender--"'Then I'll do it. Because I don't care about me'" (HLWE,

275)--and her final pretense of acceptance--"'There's nothing wrong with me. I feel fine'" (HLWE, 278). Hemingway has used dialogue as a means of stating, ironically, the total lack of mutual communication that makes the physical intimacy shared by the man and the girl a mockery of a genuine love relationship in which both spiritual and physical intimacies exist in vital combination.

Because dialogue is the primary narrative vehicle in "Hills Like White Elephants," the major portion of this discussion has been devoted to an analysis of it. Nor does the preceding discussion exhaust the discoveries to be made through an examination of dialogue: nearly every word of every line in this story holds information pertinent to the central situation. There are, however, elements other than dialogue that are also charged with that just-below-the-surface relevance, and an examination of their contributions to the story, both in themselves and through interaction with dialogue, is essential to a full understanding of Hemingway's presentation. It is an axiom of Hemingway's technical theory that there are no wasted or irrelevant details, and "Hills Like White Elephants" is a primary example of this literary economy.

The physical setting of "Hills Like White Elephants" is given in some detail at the outset of the story. To facilitate references in my discussion of it, I will quote it here in full:

> The hills across the valley of the Ebro were long and white. On this side there was no shade and no trees and the station was between two lines of rails in the sun. Close against the side of the station there was the warm shadow of the building and a curtain, made of strings of bamboo beads, hung across the open door into the bar, to keep out flies. The American and the girl with him sat at a table in the shade, outside the building. It was very hot and the express from Barcelona would come in forty minutes. It stopped at this junction for two minutes and went on to Madrid.
>
> (HLWE, 273)

Nearly every detail given in the passage is highly significant, and an examination of the various individual elements presented here provides valuable commentary on the narrative that follows.

The specific references to the brevity of time before the arrival of the train and the shortness of its stop impose a framework of compression on the entire story. A decision of permanent consequence for two people and an unborn child is to be made in forty minutes, with only two minutes more for a possible reconsideration. R. W. Lid sees this compression of time as giving "Hills Like White Elephants" an intensity disproportionate to its length: ". . . a sense of diminishing time and approaching disaster gives the story a tension usually associated with stories that by a lengthy

development have risen to a powerful climax."[5] That a tentative decision has already been made is evidenced by the couple's presence at the train station. The dialogue, however, reveals both in content and tone the tenuous nature of that previous decision and the uncertainty and discord that still surround the question of abortion. This tension of uncertainty is intensified by the brevity of time for decision and by the fact that the decision must be final, since there are apparently no more stops between this station and Madrid (and we assume the abortion is to be performed here, since it is the destination of the train they are awaiting). The pressures of brevity of time and finality of decision combine to give momentous dimensions to the brief narrative of the story.

The careful indication of both source and destination of the train in a story in which only one of the main characters is identified, and then only by a nickname, suggests a particular significance in the direction of the journey. The train is coming from the sea-coast town of Barcelona and its destination is the arid plateau area of Madrid. The journey to Madrid is a movement away from the sea and life to sterility and death, and it is significant that the choice of an abortion will send the couple toward Madrid. The station, somewhere between Barcelona and Madrid, between sets of tracks leading both ways, is at a position of choice. When, at the end of the story, the man moves the suitcases

"around the station to the other tracks" (HLWE, 277) that will carry the train to Madrid, we know that that choice, with all its implications, has been made. Here again, as in "A Canary for One," we find a moral judgment implicit in the nature of the details Hemingway advances to support and complement his theme.

Another detail in the first paragraph is also unusually specific for this story, and this in itself suggests some importance attached to it. The two people with whom we are concerned are described as "/t/he American and the girl with him." Since the country is obviously Spain, the man is a foreigner, and this alienation in nationality complements his alienation from the situation in which he is involved. Because of his own character, his inherent blindness and imperceptivity, it is as impossible for him to become a real partner in a love relationship as it would be for him to become a Spaniard. That the girl's nationality is unstated suggests her ability to become part of her situation, a quality that could become a rewarding negation of self in a vital love relationship, but that instead will take the form of an annihilation of self in acquiescence to another's selfish and sterile demands.

Most important of the details in the opening paragraph is the distinctly bi-partite physical setting. On the one side is the train station, between two sets of tracks, with no trees or shade; across the river valley are the long,

white hills to which the title refers. The characters in the story are presented sitting in the shadow of the station, separated from the people inside by a beaded curtain and from the distant hills by the Ebro River. The sunlit brightness of the hills contrasts with the warm dimness of the shadow in which the couple sits, and the contrast intensifies the effect of separation. The particular significance of the hills stems less from this contrast in appearance, however, than from their effect on the girl's imagination: "'They look like white elephants,' she said" (HLWE, 273). The nature of her comment suggests her own perceptivity, her ability to see beyond the superficial. The man's reply--"'I've never seen one'"--to her imaginative observation reflects, by contrast, his inability or refusal to project his thinking beyond immediate surfaces and his failure to understand the girl he supposedly loves. There are indications that in the past the two have shared a private kind of dialogue in which a phrase "hills like white elephants" would have had meaning for both.[6] To the man's demand that they "'try and have a fine time,'" the girl's reply is "'All right. I was trying. I said the mountains looked like white elephants. Wasn't that bright?'" (HLWE, 274). The stress of a real problem, however, destroys the previous superficial bond of communication between the two, and this, too, the girl recognizes: "'. . . if I do it, then it will be nice again if I say

things are like white elephants, and you'll like it?'" (HLWE, 275).

In addition to its imaginative and privately significant aspects, the phrase "hills like white elephants" has a special relevance to the theme of the story to which it gives title. The hills are traditional Hemingway symbols of positive value, and their association with life and beauty and productivity is made explicit later in the story:

> The girl stood up and walked to the end of the station. Across, on the other side, were fields of grain and trees along the banks of the Ebro. Far away, beyond the river, were mountains. The shadow of a cloud moved across the field of grain and she saw the river through the trees. (HLWE, 276)

The vital quality of the landscape associated with the hills provides a focus for the girl's sensitivity to the life within her as representing the fruitful, living evidence of their love. The man fails to respond to the mountains, just as he fails to understand the meaning of the life he wishes to destroy, and he urges the girl to "'come on back in the shade'" (HLWE, 276), away from her vision of life. The girl's recognition of the futility of her vision in light of the man's imperceptivity is reflected in a shift of view from the fertile mountain region across the river to the barren hills on the nearer side of the valley:

> ". . . you've got to realize-----"

"I realize," the girl said. "Can't we maybe stop talking?"

They sat down at the table and the girl looked across at the hills on the dry side of the valley and the man looked at her and at the table. (HLWE, 276-277)

The term "white elephant," given concrete form in symbolic Hemingway mountains, possesses an ambiguity of meaning that provides perfect focus for the antithetical views of the man and girl, and again we see the use of identical detail for contrasting significance that is the technical hallmark of this story. To the man, the child is a "white elephant" in the sense that it is a useless, unwanted, troublesome gift; to the girl the child would be a possession of rare and great worth, and an omen of a good and fruitful continuance for their love.[7] She seeks to put a new, deep meaning into a relationship that has previously drawn pleasure from such superficial pleasantries as "hills like white elephants," but the man's sterility triumphs, and the hills that symbolize their love remain those on the dry side of the valley. These small arid parodies of the grandiose fertile mountains in the distance objectify the mockery that their kind of love makes of the beauty and magnitude that are the potential of real love.

Although not all details in this story are so filled with significance as the elements of time and setting, all of them do provide some valuable commentary on the central

situation. The variety of drinks the couple tries suggests an attempt to escape from or soften the outlines of reality. The licorice taste that seems to pervade all their drinks suggests the dull sameness of their life routine[8]; the blackening that obscures the natural clarity of licorice in the process of extraction parallels the sullied purity of their own love, which is itself only a flavoring for their lives. The Spanish woman who brings drinks at the man's order and thus helps him to evade reality provides contrast to the girl who is attempting to make him see the need to accept reality if life is to be vital and valuable.

The girl's attempt to evoke a response to love and life within the man is perhaps doomed to failure because the quality of their mutual love is insufficient to nourish any kind of growth. Objectification of this insufficient quality is strikingly provided in a reference to suitcases near the end of the story: ". . . /he/ looked at the bags against the wall of the station. There were labels on them from all the hotels where they had spent nights" (HLWE, 277). This small detail suggests a rootless, shallow, transient relationship in general, as well as providing a direct reference to antecedent events that lends realism to the present situation.[9] The bead curtain, too, with its illusion of surface unity and its reality of separate fragments, evident any time pressure is applied to it, counterpoints the superficial quality of a relationship

that has dissolved under tension. When, in a moment of stress, the girl fingers two of the rosary-like strings of beads in a prayer-like gesture (HLWE, 275), the denial of her wish for a love vitalized by shared concern, understanding, and responsibility is already implicit in the separateness of the strands she holds.

The surface of "Hills Like White Elephants" is a lengthy dialogue of apparent inconsequentials and evasions with a few seemingly random details of setting interposed sporadically throughout. Close examination has shown, however, that both dialogue and concrete detail are precisely selected to convey through suggestion a quantity of information and an intensity of emotional impact beyond what would be possible through direct exposition. The particular device by which the concealed portion of this Hemingway iceberg is suggested is that of repetition of detail for variation of effect. This particular technique serves to emphasize the theme of the story by suggesting a basic disparity and alienation of thought and feeling underlying a precarious and deceptive surface unity. The general suggestive method of conveying information is the same technique that we found used in "A Canary for One" and that we will also discover in "Homage to Switzerland," but here, as in each of the other stories, it is adapted to the particularized needs of the dramatic situation at hand.

CHAPTER FOUR

"Homage to Switzerland"

"Homage to Switzerland,"[1] though less dense in significant detail and less tightly restricted in point of view than "A Canary for One" and "Hills Like White Elephants," uses techniques found in both these earlier stories in combination, demonstrating yet another variation of the iceberg technique. The story is separated into three parts, each involving a different character but with all three characters in identical in-story situations. The general effect of contrast through similarity involves the same technique used in "Hills Like White Elephants"; the revelation of individual personality through a consistent psychological reaction to a series of details parallels the technique of "A Canary for One."

The constant factor in each of the three sections of this story is one of time-space locus: the setting is a Swiss train station at night in which a passenger awaits the Simplon-Orient Express, which is an hour late. Although the station is in a different town in each narrative division, the interior detail and subordinate characters are nearly identical and in each town it is snowing. The variable in each section is the lone passenger focal to each situation; the varying reactions of the three men make of the three identical situations three distinct and varied

incidents. Each of the characters is out of adjustment with life; the setting, by virtue of consistent repetition, provides a neutral background against which the nature of the maladjustment and the character's attempt to cope with it can be revealed with complete individuality in each case. The delay of the train, the enveloping snow, and the fact that all the men are foreigners (Americans) combine to create a temporal-spatial-social suspension in which each character is symbolically isolated, essentially alone, without the need of any kind of mask.[2] The porters and waitress in each station are human elements of setting, without personal significance for the central character. The net effect of situational details is freedom from all outside pressures that might curtail or distort psychological revelation on the part of each of the three central characters.

Part I of "Homage to Switzerland" bears the subtitle "Portrait of Mr. Wheeler in Montreux." The shortest of the three parts, it presents, as its title suggests, a surface view of the central character, a presentation appropriate to his own superficiality. While waiting for the train, he amuses himself by annoying the waitress with a repeated offer to buy her favors, secure in the knowledge that she neither can nor will comply. His cold and ungenerous personal nature is underscored by his attitude toward money: he offers the waitress three hundred francs to come upstairs with him, knowing she will not accept, but gives her only

one franc in reward for her actual service to him and then immediately regrets that it was not less. The final paragraph of Part I focuses on this materialistic attitude as the primary coloring for this portrait of a man with a sterile and perverted sense of value:

> Standing on the cement platform beside his bags, looking down the rails toward the headlight of the train coming through the snow, Mr. Wheeler was thinking that it was very inexpensive sport. He had only spent, actually, aside from the dinner, seven francs for a bottle of wine and a franc for the tip. Seventy-five centimes would have been better. He would have felt better now if the tip had been seventy-five centimes. One franc Swiss is five francs French. Mr. Wheeler was headed for Paris. He was very careful about money and did not care for women. He had been in that station before and he knew there was no upstairs to go to. Mr. Wheeler never took chances.
>
> (HTS, 424-425)

The quality of character revealed in this final paragraph is, as usual in Hemingway, carefully suggested by the narrative that precedes. This narrative opens with a description of the setting that will recur in each of the other two parts:

> Inside the station café it was warm and light. The wood of the tables shone from wiping and there were

baskets of pretzels in glazed paper sacks. The chairs were carved, but the seats were worn and comfortable. There was a carved wooden clock on the wall and a bar at the far end of the room. Outside the window it was snowing.

Two of the station porters sat drinking new wine at the table under the clock. Another porter came in and said the Simplon-Orient Express was an hour late at Saint Maurice. He went out. The waitress came over to Mr. Wheeler's table. (HTS, 422)

Although this description and those in Parts II and III are all presented objectively, slight differences in each case suggest some relevance to the individual episodes of the particular manner of presentation in each. On the most general level there is significance in the grouping of details. In this first description, environmental details are grouped together and presented first, followed by a similar grouping of the people on the scene. This categorization suggests a methodical mind that tends to classify the surrounding world. To this consciousness people are people, regardless of function or activity, and all are grouped together. (Although this observation may seem to be over-reading at this point, it does gain significance when contrasted with the descriptions in Parts II and III.)

In addition to revealing a methodical consciousness, the first two paragraphs suggest a superficial quality of

perception. The descriptions are relatively general and the impressions limited in scope, especially when compared with those of the characters in the later episodes. One object at a time presents its general outlines to view unless two objects are so close together in space that one cannot be noted independently of the other; there is no broadness of view or conscious grouping and selecting of elements on the basis of importance. The quality of description here comments on the narrow, imperceptive vision of Mr. Wheeler and the spare, unimaginative quality of his response to life.

Between this introductory description and the final summary paragraph quoted earlier, the narrative advances primarily by means of dialogue. Conversation is opened when the waitress asks Mr. Wheeler if he would like a cup of coffee; his initial response, "'If you think it won't keep me awake'" (HTS, 422), is lightly bantering in tone, but the particular phrase he chooses reflects an unwillingness to be really alive to what is around him. When the waitress returns to his table with the coffee, Mr. Wheeler engages in polite conversation, asking what languages she speaks and offering her a drink and a cigar. None of these opens a channel of communication: aside from addressing her as "Fraülein" and "Mademoiselle," Mr. Wheeler doesn't attempt to speak in any language but English; she cannot accept his offer of a drink while at work; and his offer of

a cigar does not even elicit the brief rapport of a shared jest. In light of the waitress's disinterest, Mr. Wheeler's next request is somewhat striking in its effrontery:

> "Fraülein," he called. The waitress came over.
>
> "What would you like, sir?"
>
> "You," he said.
>
> "You must not joke me like that."
>
> "I'm not joking."
>
> "Then you must not say it."
>
> "I haven't time to argue," Mr. Wheeler said. "The train comes in forty minutes. If you'll go upstairs with me I'll give you a hundred francs."
>
> (HTS, 423)

The waitress threatens to talk to a porter and tells Mr. Wheeler he will have to leave if he persists in these demands; his response is to demand why she doesn't go away. Twice more he calls her back to his table to make senseless repetitions of his proposition, each time offering her one hundred francs more; he toys with her as a cat with a mouse, watching her "interestedly" and smiling "to himself for some time" (HTS, 423, 424). His game stops only when the porter comes to announce the train's arrival; and as he moves out onto the platform we are permitted the glimpse into his consciousness that fills in the developing outlines of the portrait. A complementary revelation of the waitress's thoughts, slipped between Mr. Wheeler's move to the

platform and our move into his consciousness, prepares us for the final solidification of his image:

> . . . The waitress watched him go. He's ugly, she thought, ugly and hateful. Three hundred francs for a thing that is nothing to do. How many times have I done that for nothing. And no place to go here. If he had sense he would know there was no place. No time and no place to go. Three hundred francs to do that. What people those Americans.
>
> (HTS, 424)

Mr. Wheeler's "sport" reveals a perverted and sterile attitude toward sex that, in combination with his methodical but shallow perception and his inability to communicate normally with other individuals, bespeaks a perverted and sterile attitude toward life itself. The statement that he "did not care for women," as well as an over-explicit catalogue with which he counters the waitress's threat to call a porter ("'I don't want a porter,' Mr. Wheeler said. 'Nor a policeman nor one of those boys that sell cigarettes'" /HTS, 423/) hints at a sexual interest in men. Yet his extreme detachment and his refusal to take chances argue against any practice of homosexual relations. The most that can be said with certainty is summed up by Defalco's ". . . there is something abnormal in his sexual tendencies,"[3] but that much is clear, and it is ironic that Mr. Wheeler has chosen as his destination a country traditionally associated

with romantic love. There, like the value of his money ("One franc Swiss is five francs French" /HTS, 4247), the opportunities to experience life will be multiplied many times beyond the possibilities open to him in a snow-bound train station, but to a man who never takes chances, these opportunities will remain as meaningless and without consequence as safely sporting with a waitress.

Part II, "Mr. Johnson Talks About It at Vevey," involves a man who is out of adjustment with life in a way different from Mr. Wheeler. We have already encountered the locale of this episode, Vevey, as a significant detail in the earlier story "A Canary for One," and here again it serves as background for the failure and thwarting of a love relationship. Mr. Johnson, like the man in "A Canary for One," is moving in a world presently colored by the shock of separation from his wife, although in Mr. Johnson's case the separation is given greater finality of effect by the term "divorce." A second difference between the two men lies in the apparent freshness of their common experience: for Mr. Johnson, the wound is still new and uppermost in his consciousness; for the narrator in "A Canary for One" the effect of his experience has penetrated deeper into his consciousness so that it colors his vision of life even more fully but less obviously.

Because Mr. Johnson's experience is so recent and so major, it is a constant and all-consuming pain from which

he seeks relief. In the atmosphere of suspension created by the delayed train and the falling snow, Mr. Johnson, totally alone with his problem, attempts a catharsis through speech by engaging in conversation with the waitress and then with the porters. Although all listen politely, Mr. Johnson's problem is so much his own that these strangers cannot offer him even the sympathy that might arise from mutual understanding of the situation. Voicing the problem leaves him only a verbal echo of the pain within, and he moves to meet the train with a new awareness of failure: "Inside the cafe he had thought that talking about it would blunt it; but it had not blunted it; it had only made him feel nasty" (HTS, 430).

Mr. Johnson's story is given to us through the same setting and opening dialogue as Mr. Wheeler's, but with minor variations that reveal the two men to be quite different. Part II opens in the same way as Part I, with a description of the interior of the train station:

> Inside the station café it was warm and light; the tables were shiny from wiping and on some there were red and white striped table cloths; and there were blue and white striped table cloths on the others and on all of them baskets with pretzels in glazed paper sacks. The chairs were carved but the wood seats were worn and comfortable. There was a clock on the wall, a zinc bar at the far end of the

room, and outside the window it was snowing. Two of the station porters sat drinking new wine at the table under the clock.

Another porter came in and said the Simplon-Orient Express was an hour late at Saint-Maurice. The waitress came over to Mr. Johnson's table.

(HTS, 425)

In essential details the station at Vevey seems the same as the one at Montreux, but there is a difference in the way it is described. Here again there are two groupings, but unlike the first description the people here are separated into active and passive and the passive are grouped with elements of setting. More details are given--the tables have striped cloths, the chairs have wood seats, and the bar is of zinc--with slightly more emphasis on color. And here objects are grouped descriptively with an awareness of patterns; for example, grouped together in one sentence are observations on the lightness of the room and the brightness of the tables with their shiny wiped surfaces, their bright cloths, and the glazed sacks of pretzels. The chairs, most important to human comfort of the objects in the room, are given special notice; and the clock, bar, and window are grouped together as they appear in spatial context. The two porters drinking at the table under the clock are singled out but still grouped with the details of setting that surround them.

The sensitivity and perceptive structuring of detail evidenced in this initial description bespeak a consciousness that is more alive and aware of reality and its complexities than a Mr. Wheeler who has everything prefigured and categorized.

More of Mr. Johnson's character is revealed in his brief opening dialogue with the waitress:

> "The Express is an hour late, sir," she said.
>
> "Can I bring you some coffee?"
>
> "If it's not too much trouble."
>
> "Please?" asked the waitress.
>
> "I'll take some." (HTS, 425)

Mr. Johnson's replies to the waitress, especially when contrasted with Mr. Wheeler's "If you think it won't keep me awake" and "Bring me some" (HTS, 422), are self-effacing and undemanding. His further conversations with her include essentially the same topics advanced by Mr. Wheeler: he asks her what languages she speaks, offers her a cigar, and suggests that she "play" with him. In each instance, however, the circumstances differ from those surrounding Mr. Wheeler's questions. Mr. Johnson's query about the languages is not just idle curiosity; he himself is capable of speaking good French and at least a few phrases of German, as he demonstrates later in his conversation with the porters. When he offers the waitress a cigar and she laughingly refuses, he gracefully acknowledges and identi-

fies with her position: "'Neither do I [smoke],' said Johnson. 'It's a dirty habit'" (HTS, 425). The same kind of diffident self-effacement is repeated when Mr. Johnson compares his watch with the clock and decides his must be the one in error and again when the waitress's refusal of his invitation to "play" prompts him immediately to modify his request: "'I don't mean anything violent. You wouldn't like to make up a party and see the night life of Vevey? Bring a girl friend if you like'" (HTS, 426).

From this brief and casual bit of dialogue it is possible to determine that in addition to being perceptive and alive to life, as the opening description revealed, Mr. Johnson is both capable and desirous of relating to other people while at the same time unsure of himself in his attempts to do so. He reaches out to others to make his decisions, as when he asks the porters what kind of champagne to order, and to fill his needs, as when he seeks the company of the waitress and solicits the porters' understanding of divorce and its effects. The particular cause of Mr. Johnson's uncertainty and need is concisely, although indirectly, suggested in an interchange with the waitress:

"I must work," the waitress said. "I have my duty here."

"I know," said Johnson. "But couldn't you get a substitute? They used to do that in the Civil War."

"Oh, no, sir. I must be here myself in the

person." (HTS, 426)

Mr. Johnson's suggestion of a substitute, juxtaposed with a comment on the Civil War, provides a metaphor for his own search for something to fill the void created by his domestic war; the waitress's reply forces explicit recognition of the impossibility of substitution. Unable to engage the waitress as a personal and present substitute for his alienated wife, Mr. Johnson makes an abortive, half-jesting attempt to enjoy vicariously the waitress's past romantic experiences: "'Tell me about it,' Johnson said. 'Were the Berlitz undergraduates a wild lot? What about all this necking and petting? Were there many smoothies? . . .'" (HTS, 426).

Having totally baffled the waitress by his strange talk, Mr. Johnson abandons his conversation with her and turns to the porters, attempting to soothe through the catharsis of speech and the comfort of champagne and male companionship the pain that could not be touched by action. But just as the waitress was unable to help him by becoming a substitute for his wife, so the porters are unable to help him because they are unable to appreciate his problem. They are old men, while Mr. Johnson is only thirty-five; they speak different languages and come from a country where divorce is infrequent; only two of the three are married and neither of them has ever been divorced. Their questions are polite, confined to details of cost and

standard reasons for divorce, and the conversation is superficial and repetitive:

> "Monsieur is going to divorce," the first porter explained.
>
> "Oh," said the second porter.
>
> "Ah ha," the third porter said. (HTS, 429)

The audience for Mr. Johnson's verbal catharsis has neither personal interest in him nor understanding of his predicament, and the words themselves are hollow comfort. When the porters turn the conversation to details of his profession, Mr. Johnson recognizes the failure of another attempt to draw support from those around him and he goes into the snow forty-five minutes early to meet the train. As a final gesture of friendship, he leaves the second, unopened, bottle of champagne with the porters, and from outside he watches them reject it:

> . . . He looked back through the window at the three porters sitting at the table. The waitress was filling their glasses from the last wine of the opened bottle. She took the unopened bottle back to the bar. That makes them three francs something apiece, Johnson thought. (HTS, 430)

This small act by three strangers is a mocking reminder of another, larger gift refused: his wife has exchanged his love for a divorce worth "'/t/wo thousand francs Swiss'" (HTS, 428).

Although Mr. Johnson's attempts to work out his problem are unsuccessful, his direct confrontation of that problem and his active search for a solution, coupled with his warmth and sensitivity to life, argue an optimistic view for readjustment that cannot possibly be held for the rigid and sterile Mr. Wheeler. Through nearly identical situations of place and time these two men have been revealed as nearly opposite.

A third damaged concept of love is involved in the problem facing Mr. Harris, the central character of Part III, "The Son of a Fellow Member at Territet." As in Parts I and II, the title here provides a key to the material to be presented. The focus for Mr. Harris's disillusionment is that he is son to a father who he feels has betrayed him. In the episode presented here, Mr. Harris, awaiting the delayed train, is engaged in conversation by an old man present in the station. The man's advanced age, his highly-prized membership in the National Geographic Society, and his "'I am not active any longer'" (HTS, 434) relate him to Mr. Harris's father, and Mr. Harris's cynical baiting of the old man, who is easy prey, to be sure, seems to become an outlet for the scorn with which he regards his own father.

As the reader may by now expect, the opening description reveals the station at Territet to be nearly identical with those at Montreux and Vevey:

In the station café at Territet it was a little too warm; the lights were bright and the tables shiny from polishing. There were baskets with pretzels in glazed paper sacks on the tables and cardboard pads for beer glasses in order that the moist glasses would not make rings on the wood. The chairs were carved but the wooden seats were worn and quite comfortable. There was a clock on the wall, a bar at the far end of the room, and outside the window it was snowing. There was an old man drinking coffee at a table under the clock and reading the evening paper. A porter came in and said the Simplon-Orient Express was an hour late at Saint Maurice. The waitress came over to Mr. Harris's table. Mr. Harris had just finished dinner. (HTS, 430-431)

And again, within the context of similarity there are highly individual elements that act as commentaries on the central character in the episode. That all the details of setting and the people involved are grouped in a single descriptive block suggests the absence of even Mr. Wheeler's rudimentary discrimination, although there is a sensitivity to detail that Mr. Wheeler lacks. The central consciousness seems to have separated the world into two groups--himself and everything else, and in that part that is not himself, all things are of equal and minor importance. Yet to qualify this detachment there remains just enough involvement with things

to permit dissatisfaction: the room is described as "a little too warm" and the chairs are only "quite comfortable" (my italics). There is also a sensation of an artificial, protective-covering quality in the vision of the central consciousness: the illumination is specifically noted to be coming from light fixtures, the tables are shiny from polishing rather than merely wiping, and there are cardboard pads to protect the table surface from moisture and protective glazed sacks over the pretzels. (Although this last detail is part of the opening description in all three sections of the story, it takes on special significance here.)

The particular quality of the opening description suggests that Harris looks at the world from an essentially detached point of view, seeing it as artificial and imperfect, and reducing its detail to a single mass and its phenomena to simple cause-effect relationships (the brightness comes from lights; the tables are shiny because they have been polished; the cardboard pads are present to protect the table from moisture).

The now-familiar dialogue with the waitress makes more explicit Mr. Harris's attitude of bored unconcern:

> "The Express is an hour late, sir. Can I bring you some coffee?"
>
> "If you like."
>
> "Please?" asked the waitress.
>
> "All right," said Mr. Harris. (HTS, 431)

This superficial calm is belied a moment later, however, in a small but significant gesture: "She brought the coffee from the kitchen and Mr. Harris put sugar in it, [and] <u>crunched</u> the lumps with his spoon. . ." (HTS, 431, my italics). The delicate savagery of this action beneath the surface of the coffee provides a physical parallel to Mr. Harris's subtle verbal destruction of the old man under cover of their polite and amiable conversation, later in the story.

Like Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Johnson, Mr. Harris queries the waitress about her language ability and offers her a drink and a cigar. Like the waitress in Part II, the waitress here views the latter offer as a jest, but unlike Mr. Johnson, Mr. Harris guides the tentatively opened channel of communication almost immediately into a cul-de-sac by bringing up the name of David Belasco, a playwright with whom the waitress is unfamiliar and who is no longer alive. Harris's own commentary on Belasco ("'But I don't agree with him. Then, too, he's dead now'" [HTS, 431]) provides a minor parallel to his attitude toward a father who has taken a stand, however negative, which his son cannot accept.

When the waitress takes her leave, the old man approaches Mr. Harris to ask if he "'might be a member of the National Geographic Society'" (HTS, 432). Mr. Harris cordially offers a chair and a drink but will accept nothing

from a man who suggests to him his father. The conversation that ensues is a study in opposites: the old man is naive and simplistic in his view of things while Mr. Harris is cynical and complex. For nearly the entire conversation Mr. Harris toys with the old man, and with himself, by feigning an interest in and knowledge of the affairs of the National Geographic Society. To the old man this interest is convincing; to the reader it is thoroughly a sham. To Mr. Harris, however, the distinction may not be so clear. His string of pretenses, including the repeated implication that his father is alive,[4] are a mockery of his father through the person of the old man; yet they may represent a deeper urge to identify with his father, to understand the man in order to be able to accept the act. That Mr. Harris does not understand his father and cannot accept his suicide is evident in the reticence he exhibits about the subject and the terse bitterness with which he finally reveals the facts to the old man: "'I'm sure he would have liked to meet you but he died last year. Shot himself, oddly enough'" (HTS, 434). Equally expressive is Mr. Harris's reply to the old man's condolences:

> "I am very truly sorry. I am sure his loss was a blow to science as well as to his family."
>
> "Science took it awfully well." (HTS, 434)

Here, however, it is not what is said but what is left unsaid below the jesting surface of the remark that is reveal-

ing: science in its impersonality may have taken the father's death very well; his family has not.

Each of the other two parts of "Homage to Switzerland" has ended on an essentially pessimistic note: Mr. Wheeler is too insulated by self-satisfaction to recognize his need; Mr. Johnson knows his problem but has failed to discover any means of alleviating his pain. I would suggest that Part III has a more positive ending.[5] As long as Mr. Harris evades recognition of his father's death, even though he is aware that he is carrying out a pretense, his attitude toward the man who resembles his father is one of artfully disguised scorn. Yet once he has been forced to verbalize the problem, his attitude seems subtly changed. As a final gesture he offers the old man his card: "'This is my card,' Harris said. 'His initials were E. J. instead of E. D. I know he would have liked to know you'" (HTS, 435). In effect, Harris has identified himself with his father, if only by name, while at the same time indicating a difference; he has acknowledged his kinship and yet maintained a slight differentiation of identities that permits one to act in a way the other may not understand. When the old man, whose name proves to be Dr. Wyer, presents his card in return, Mr. Harris promises to "'keep it very carefully'" (HTS, 435). In revealing his name, the man who resembles Mr. Harris's father is also revealing himself as a distinct personality with a life of his own of which Mr. Harris is

and must remain ignorant. The same kind of ignorance, to a lesser degree, must apply to Mr. Harris's understanding of his father. That his father acted in a way his son could not understand does not necessarily constitute a betrayal, and some recognition of his father's right to individuality seems implicit in Mr. Harris's promise to keep "'very carefully'" the card of the man who resembles his father but is in reality someone entirely different. Although acceptance of his father's name and his right to a separate identity probably does not constitute a total resolution to the problem of a faith betrayed, it is the first step in the right direction. It is perhaps significant that of the three men Mr. Harris is the only one who is going all the way home, back to face the problem at its source, and the only one who does not move into the cold, stormy atmosphere outside at the end of his story.

As a story, "Homage to Switzerland" is inferior to both "A Canary for One" and "Hills Like White Elephants," although the latter are earlier stories. Neither its theme nor its structure is tightly unified; there are many non-functional details, especially autobiographical; the characters lack depth; and the repetition of identical setting and dialogue in three different situations sacrifices some degree of meaning and realism, especially in Parts II and III. Sheridan Baker's evaluation of the story as "a trivial experiment with form"[6] is quite probably just, but it is precisely this

experimentation with form that makes "Homage to Switzerland" of importance to a discussion of technique. All of the techniques noted in the two stories discussed earlier are to be found in this single story: both setting and dialogue are important vehicles for suggestive detail, and both singleness of impression through variety of detail and contrast of impression through similarity of detail are used as techniques of revelation. Unique to the story is the extension of the contrast-through-similarity device to encompass three separate incidents. Once Mr. Wheeler's character has been established through given details of dialogue and setting, the repetition of these details in the next episode carries with it an impression of Mr. Wheeler that provides implicit character commentary, through comparison and contrast, on Mr. Johnson. When the details are repeated a third time, the carry-over effect is doubled.

The potential of the technical combinations and innovations in "Homage to Switzerland" is not realized within the story itself; theme and form are not so well integrated here as in other stories, and the technical machinery creaks. Yet Hemingway has still managed to suggest a great deal of what is below the surface. Less firmly constructed than the other two stories we have discussed, "Homage to Switzerland" is nevertheless a bona fide Hemingway "iceberg," and its outline is unique.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

The object of this study has been an examination of Hemingway's use of the "iceberg technique" in his short stories. The stories discussed are prime examples of a technical approach that is standard in Hemingway's short fiction but that differs from story to story in the degree of suggestive concentration, the kind of implicative details used, and the kind of technical vehicle (dialogue or setting) chosen. Although the three stories studied here are highly representative and among Hemingway's best (with some qualification in regard to "Homage to Switzerland"), they by no means exhaust the potential variations on this technique. The revelation of psychological changes through a subtly progressive alteration in dialogue in "The Three Day Blow" (1925), the combination of a single act and some apparently unrelated, inconsequential dialogue to suggest a still different problem in "Cat in the Rain" (1925), and the suggestive ritual of pure action in "Big Two-Hearted River" (1925) are all distinctly individual applications of the "iceberg technique." In each of the short stories the demands of theme and structure transform a general technical principle into a particularized expression of a unique literary situation.

That Hemingway is not always in complete control of his

delicate suggestive technique is evidenced in "Homage to Switzerland," but that he is capable of "Hills Like White Elephants," aptly described by Sheridan Baker as "a study in Hemingway's ultimate terseness"[1] is proof of his consummate technical mastery and artistry.

NOTES

Chapter One

[1] J. Kashkeen, "Ernest Hemingway: A Tragedy of Craftsmanship," in Ernest Hemingway: The Man and His Work, ed. John McCaffery (Cleveland and New York, 1950), p. 107, feels the failure of Hemingway's artistic vision undercuts the excellence of his technique, leaving his work hollow, without meaning. I would argue that his technique and incomplete artistic vision are complementary; since he has found no structuring principle for reality, he seeks to present reality objectively, without interpretation. This statement must, of course, be qualified to the extent that the quality of a writer's artistic vision determines the selection of those aspects of life to which he gives literary representation, and that no writer can be said to be totally objective. That Hemingway's view of reality as fragmentized and negative does not comply with Kashkeen's demand for the literary affirmation of a meaningful principle for life does not make that view irrelevant or without value. Henry James' mandate that we must grant the artist his donnée and judge him only on how well he has worked with it is especially applicable to this debate over the "worth" of Hemingway as literary artist. In his best work, Hemingway's theme and technique are never at odds; rather, they work together for a unity of effect that few other writers have surpassed.

[2]Kashkeen, p. 91.

[3]H. E. Bates, "Hemingway's Short Stories," in Hemingway and His Critics, ed. Carlos Baker (New York, 1961), p. 75, cites the cooperative effort by reader and writer as a point of contrast between Hemingway's art and the wordiness, exploitation of flavor, and extensive use of emotive and connotative values of words by his literary predecessors:

> Hemingway swept every letter of that convention away. In its place he put nothing but his own ability to imply, by the choice, association, and order of the words, whether a character was feeling and speaking with anger, regret, desperation, tenderness; quickly or slowly; ironically or bitterly. All intonation and emotion lay somewhere in the apparently abrupt and casual arrangement of the words . . . , and Hemingway asked nothing except the co-operation of the reader in the job of capturing these intonations and emotions.

[4]Ernest Hemingway, Death in the Afternoon (New York, 1932, p. 2.

[5]Carlos Baker, Hemingway: The Writer as Artist (Princeton, 1963), p. 52: "Facts, visible or audible or tangible facts, facts baldly stated, facts without verbal paraphernalia to inhibit their striking power, are the stuff of Hemingway's prose."

Bates, p. 73: "What Hemingway went for was that direct pictorial contact between eye and object, between object and reader. . . . He trimmed off explanation, discussion, even comment; he hacked off all metaphorical floweriness; he pruned off the dead, sacred clichès; until finally, through the sparse trained words, there was a view."

Kashkeen, p. 99, sees the roots of Hemingway's style in his mistrust of the power of words to convey real meanings. He searches, rather, to express by means of hints, external gestures, and situations; his style combines the demi-mot and the mot juste.

[6] Harry Levin, "Observations on the Style of Ernest Hemingway," in Hemingway and His Critics, ed. Baker, p. 109.

[7] This summary of the main characteristics of vocabulary and syntax is based on Levin. See his article (note 6) for a more detailed treatment.

[8] Carlos Baker, Hemingway, pp. 55-56.

[9] This statement is recorded in George Plimpton's "An Interview with Ernest Hemingway," in Hemingway and His Critics, ed. Baker, p. 34.

[10] Carlos Baker, "Introduction" to his Hemingway and His Critics, p. 15.

E. M. Halliday, "Hemingway's Ambiguity: Symbolism and

Irony," in Hemingway, ed. Robert Weeks (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1962), p. 70, finds this qualified symbolism a natural product of Hemingway's concern with situational fact: "With all his famous skill in writing with his eye upon the object, he understood from the beginning that it was only the object in relationship to other objects and to the observer that really counted: significance is, in short, a matter of likeness [symbolism] and difference [irony]."

Chapter Two

[1]Ernest Hemingway, "A Canary for One," The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway (New York, 1938), pp. 337-342. The story was originally published in Scribner's (April, 1927) and subsequently included in the collection Men Without Women (New York, 1927) between the stories "Ten Indians" and "An Alpine Idyll." Citations from this story will be noted by the abbreviation CFO, followed by the page number, parenthetically within the text.

[2]Philip Young, Ernest Hemingway (New York, 1952), p.150. See also Robert Lewis, Jr., Hemingway on Love (Austin, Texas, 1965), p. 9, and Joseph Defalco, The Hero in Heming-way's Short Stories (Pittsburgh, 1963), pp. 1953-184.

[3]John S. Rouch makes a similar, though less extensive, analysis of this story as a point of comparison for a

similar technique in Hemingway's novel A Farewell to Arms. Since Mr. Rouch's approach differs from mine only in extent, I will merely cite the reference here: "Jake Barnes as Narrator," Modern Fiction Studies, 11 (1965-1966), pp. 361-370.

[4]Since I refer to the first three paragraphs of the story at several points in this paper, I will quote them here in full for reference and omit page references to this passage within the text:

> The train passed very quickly a long, red stone house with a garden and four thick palm-trees with tables under them in the shade. On the other side was the sea. Then there was a cutting through red stone and clay, and the sea was only occasionally and far below against rocks.
>
> "I bought him in Palermo," the American lady said. "We only had an hour ashore and it was Sunday morning. The man wanted to be paid in dollars and I gave him a dollar and a half. He really sings very beautifully."
>
> It was very hot in the train and it was very hot in the lit salon compartment. There was no breeze came through the open window. The American lady pulled the window-blind down and there was no more sea, even occasionally. On the other side there was glass, then the corridor, then an open window, and outside the

window were dusty trees and an oiled road and flat fields of grapes, with gray-stone hills behind them. (CFO, 337)

[5]Tony Tanner, The Reign of Wonder (Cambridge, 1965), p. 231.

[6]John Hagopian and Martin Dolch, "A Canary for One," Insight I: Analyses of American Literature (Frankfurt am Main, 1962), p. 98, tie in with the journey's end the man's impersonal impression that "nothing had eaten any breakfast" in the towns outside of Paris. For the narrator, there is no "new day" in his marriage; the marriage has been like the train ride--rapide, uninspiring, dead-ending in darkness; the gate through which they pass in the Gare de Lyons symbolizes the termination of their marriage, and the ticket man is the divorce judge to whom they surrender their rights to continue the journey.

[7]Carlos Baker, Hemingway, p. 137.

[8]In a sense, using the vineyards as a point of comparison is going outside of the story for significance; but it would seem that since the vineyards are a commonly noted feature of Vevey, we might safely assume, in a story that so obviously uses the iceberg technique, that this is one of the things that Hemingway "knew" about the story and could therefore leave out.

[9] Hagopian and Dolch, p. 97, feel the narrator's deliberate feigning of an English character is his way of poking ". . . bitter fun at the old woman who thought they were English (thus indicating his opinion of the stupidity about nationalities that underlies her objection to her daughter's love affair) . . . ." Although I think "bitter" is a rather strong judgment of this remark, the narrator must certainly consider the remark stupid, in light of the failure of his marriage. He seems to be indicating that nationality is unimportant, that the issues involved in the success or failure of love involve much more.

[10] Hagopian and Dolch, p. 97, see this initial objectivity of point of view as a flaw in the story, in light of the switch to first-person narration in the second part of the story (at the point in the journey when they enter the towns outside of Paris); they feel it forces an unwarranted reorientation in the reader's attitude. I feel, however, that this switch in point of view is effective precisely because of this effect of reorientation. We have the impression of extreme detachment, almost to the point of depersonalization, through the objective point of view, and this impression accentuates the effect of those details of landscape and conversation that do manage to penetrate this detachment. The fact that the appearance of the outside-of-Paris landscape can force the man's attention to return

to himself and his wife informs the reader that there is something especially significant about this place the train is approaching--something particularly relevant to the narrator and his emotional problem.

[11] Defalco, p. 176.

[12] Carlos Baker, Hemingway, p. 138.

Chapter Three

[1] Ernest Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants," The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, pp. 273-278. The story was originally published in transition in August, 1927, and subsequently collected in Men Without Women, where it appeared between the stories "In Another Country" and "The Killers." Citations from this story will be noted by the abbreviation HLWE, followed by the page number, parenthetically within the text.

[2] Kashkeen, p. 103, applies the term "leit-motif" to this characteristic of Hemingway's technique and finds it basic to Hemingway's style. Hemingway's purpose differs from that of the German composers, however, in that he uses his repeated details either to establish contrast or to create a definite sense of gradual progression, in the manner of Gertrude Stein's "continuous present."

[3] Richard Bridgman, The Colloquial Style in America

(Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 228.

Austin Wright, The American Short Story in the Twenties (Chicago, 1961), p. 298, states more explicitly the reflection of the iceberg technique in the dialogue: "Though the story is almost entirely dialogue, no speech is merely expository. Every speech expresses and furthers the conflict; the necessary background to the conflict . . . is entirely implicit in the conflict itself as it develops."

[4] R. W. Lid, "Hemingway and the Need for Speech," Modern Fiction Studies, 8 (1962-63), p. 405.

[5] Lid, p. 403.

See also Defalco, p. 170: "Placing the action in the waiting room of a train station, and having the characters awaiting a train which will stop for only two minutes, provides an intense focus upon the decision to be reached by the characters in the short span of time available."

[6] Lid, p. 404: "Two people on edge are slowly rubbing each other's nerves raw. The girl is placatory, the man sulky, and the girl retaliates, for she has started a conversation which, were their situation normal, would have a code meaning for the two of them. This is the kind of verbal experience they have shared in the past, a private, intimate response to their surroundings. The man refuses to join in her experience; in effect, he is denying her claim on him."

Lionel Trilling, in his analysis of "Hills Like White Elephants" in his The Experience of Literature (New York, 1967), p. 307, relates the man's refusal to share in the girl's descriptive fancy to the quality of reasonableness which he finds central to the story. The man maintains an attitude of detached reasonableness throughout the story as he attempts to persuade the girl she should have the abortion; the girl, on the other hand, is possessed of ". . . a desire which she does not know how to defend in words . . ." and which cannot be explained in reasonable terms. This contrast between dry reason and imaginative desire finds a focus in the girl's simile for the hills and the man's refusal to entertain that simile.

[7] Defalco, pp. 169, 170.

Trilling, p. 307, finds a somewhat more complex significance in the girl's attitude toward the "hills like white elephants": "It is decisive in the story that the girl's simile is what it is. . . . In certain parts of the East, this [white elephant] is a sacred beast; it may not be put to work but must be kept in state at great cost. Hence we call a white elephant anything that is apparently of great value and prestige but actually a drain upon our resources of which we wish we could be rid. Quite unconsciously, the girl may be making just this judgment on the life that she and her companion have chosen."

[8] Lid, p. 405.

[9] Norman Friedman, "What Makes a Short Story Short?," A College Book of Modern Fiction, ed. Walter Rideout and James Robinson (Evanston, Illinois, 1961), p. 556.

Chapter Four

[1] Ernest Hemingway, "Homage to Switzerland," The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, pp. 422-435. The story was originally published in Scribner's (April, 1933) and subsequently included in the collection Winner Take Nothing (New York, 1933) between the stories "One Reader Writes" and "A Day's Wait." Citations from this story will be noted by the abbreviation HTS, followed by the page number, parenthetically within the text.

[2] Defalco, pp. 182-183, describes Hemingway's technique here as that of "freezing" his characters, and he suggests a thematic raison d'etre that is perhaps a bit strained in its metaphysical implications but generally to the point on the organic quality of the general technique: "The three portraits of the main characters in this story reveal a moment in their lives when the mask is dropped and the essential personality shows through. The devices Hemingway uses to 'freeze' his characters in time--the late train and the identical background--magnify the portraits considerably. These people become illustrative of a cross-section of

society on the journey of life. They are held up for a brief span of time so that the artist may place the glass upon them and examine their situation more closely. All artists do this, of course, but in this story the three-portrait form reveals a facet of the theme."

I would enlarge upon Mr. Defalco's use of "cross-section" with the observation that the separate incidents do not seem to represent a progression of increasingly difficult problems or move toward a definite resolution, although there are differences in the degrees of success with which the men cope with their problems. The selection of problematical situations seems less a matter of literary effectiveness than of Hemingway's own personal preoccupations. Philip Young, in his Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration (University Park, Pa., 1966), p. 140, feels that the second part of "Homage to Switzerland" reflects Hemingway's misery over his divorce from Hadley Richardson. Hemingway's abhorrence of homosexuality and his preoccupation with his father's suicide might easily account for the first and third episodes. The arrangement of the episodes follows the order of successive stations on the train's route, but the rationale, if any, behind the pairing of characters with places is difficult to see.

[3] Defalco, p. 181.

[4] At least three times in his conversation with the old

man Harris implies that his father is alive:

"You're not a member, then?"

"No. But my father is. He's been a member for a great many years." (HTS, 432)

. . . . .

"I am sorry you are not a member. But you could obtain nomination through your father?"

"I think so," said Harris. "I must when I go back." (HTS, 432)

. . . . .

"Do you remember the panorama of the Sahara Desert?" Harris asked.

"The Sahara Desert? That was nearly fifteen years ago."

"That's right. That was one of my father's favorites."

"He doesn't prefer the newer numbers?"

"He probably does. But he was very fond of the Sahara panorama." (HTS, 433)

[5]Critical opinion is against me on this point. Defalco does not note any softening of Mr. Harris's cynicism; Sheridan Baker, Ernest Hemingway: An Introduction and Interpretation (New York, 1967), p. 85, makes the more explicit statement that "Homage to Switzerland" ". . . condemns American society with a final note of suicide." A

negative interpretation of the ending of this final episode is perhaps more consonant with Parts I and II, but I find the positive view more consonant with the details within the episode itself; it is one of the shortcomings of this particular story, however, that in too many placesthere is room for doubt about the author's intention.

[6]Sheridan Baker, p. 85.

Conclusion

[1]Sheridan Baker, p. 58.

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VITA

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